A Service-Learning Curriculum Unit © 2026 Embarc This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/

Sophomore Postsecondary Exploration
Unit Overview

Each year in the Embarc program, students will be exposed to new learning on a variety of postsecondary pathways. During Year 1, Embarc students will begin to understand how to navigate through several resources that will allow them access to postsecondary pathways. With the knowledge they will gain in Year 1, students will start the process of making informed decisions on which post secondary option they would like to pursue and they will have the tools to explore their options further.

College & Careers gives students the opportunity to develop and explore the following Key Factors and Foundational Components that are outlined in *Foundations for Young Adult Success by the The University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research*

- **Knowledge & Skills:** Knowledge is sets of facts, information, or understanding about oneself, others and the world. Skills are the learned abilities to carry out a task with intended results or goals.
- **Mindsets** are beliefs and attitudes about oneself, the external world, and the interaction between the two. They are the default lenses that individuals use to process everyday experiences. Mindsets reflect a person's unconscious biases, natural tendencies, and past experiences.
- **Agency** is the ability to make choices about and take an active role in one's life path, rather than solely being the product of one's circumstances. Agency requires the intentionality and forethought to derive a course of action and adjust course as needed to reflect on one's identity, competencies, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values.

Sophomore Postsecondary Exploration will allow students to practice and develop mastery in the following Common Core State Standards and 21st Century Skills.

Common Core State Standards

- **CC.11-12.R.I.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **CC.11-12.W.4 Production and Distribution of Writing:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CC.11-12.SL.1 Comprehension and Collaboration:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CC.11-12.SL.6 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

21st Century Skills

- **Learning and Innovation Skills:**
  - Reason Effectively
  - Make Judgments and Decisions
  - Solve Problems
  - Communicate Clearly
  - Collaborate with Others
- **Information, Media, and Technology Skills:**
  - Access and Evaluate Information
  - Use and Manage Information
- **Life and Career Skills:**
  - Adapt to Change
  - Be Flexible
  - Work Independently
  - Manage Goals and Time
  - Interact Effectively with Others
  - Work Effectively in Diverse Teams
  - Manage Projects

- Produce Results

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Sophomore Postsecondary Exploration
ARC Unit Objectives

Throughout the Embarc curriculum, students are provided opportunities to develop the key factors and foundational components to young adult success through the Action Reflection Cycle (ARC). In the graphic below, the highlighted areas indicate which Active Aspects are presented the most frequently throughout the curriculum.

Embarc

Revised, June 2017

EmbARC (Action Reflection Cycle)

	Active Aspects	Discover	Understand	Lead
Reflection = *Making Meaning*	Integrate	▪ Relates previous experiences to inform actions in familiar settings ▪ Recognizes "I did that"	▪ Makes use of previous experiences of self and others to inform actions in a wide range of settings ▪ Understands "I did that; I'm the kind of person who can"	▪ Adapts to a wide range of settings ▪ Believes "I did that; I'm the kind of person who can; I belong anywhere"
	Envision	▪ Creates a negative image of what one wants to avoid ▪ Creates a positive image of what one wants to become	▪ Classifies specific behaviors and/or strategies that will promote or derail future visions	▪ Assesses & regulates current behavior/mindsets
	Connect	▪ Talks about learning and relates to past experiences/knowledge	▪ Identifies & defines connections between new ideas/experiences and personal values	▪ Incorporates connections into personal choices
	Describe & Evaluate	▪ Talks about feelings & thoughts related to experiences ▪ Identifies obstacles that create a fixed mindset	▪ Uses experience and/or feedback to decipher between better and worse options ▪ Identifies current mindset and responds vs. reacts	▪ Relates meaning to self and "owns" experiences ▪ Exhibits a growth mindset by valuing the process over the product
Action = *Building Skills*	Contribute	▪ Acts with a purpose ▪ Follows clear directions	▪ Creates a plan of action to achieve a goal	▪ Executes a plan ▪ Values personal contributions & extends gratitude to others
	Choose	▪ Recognizes constraints/weaknesses ▪ Recognizes advantages/strengths	▪ Weighs values ▪ Makes decisions/Identifies goals	▪ Considers how decisions will affect their future (agency)
	Practice	▪ Experiences new skills by watching and mirroring others ▪ Connects with others to develop skills ▪ Experiences failure and keeps trying	▪ Applies new skills/ideas in a creative way ▪ Uses experience and/or feedback to inform next steps	▪ Develops expertise ▪ Demonstrates deep-rooted motivation/focused effort ▪ Views failure and/or feedback as an opportunity to learn
	Tinker	▪ Takes on different perspectives ▪ Negotiates ideas with others	▪ Thinks beyond what is currently possible ▪ Experiments with new ideas	▪ Creates innovative solutions/products ▪ Evaluates the outcomes
	Encounter	▪ Watches others; observes novel work	▪ Examines models	▪ Creates and/or shares products

Building Foundations for Young Adult Success Through Developmental Experiences

The Stages of the Action-Reflection Cycle (ARC) inform the foundations for young adult success by engaging the active aspects of the action/reflection cycle. New experiences/information allow learners to *build skills* during the action stages; while the reflection stages allow learners to *make meaning* by transferring skills to knowledge and integrating learning into their lives. In Embarc these skills are spiraled throughout the program in order for students to encounter active aspects of each stage over time; thus increasing a learner's opportunities to make connections and creating more robust pathways for integrating the foundational components of young adult success: self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Teacher Resources

Link to **Goal Setting Lessons**	After every 5 week mark, students should be completing grade reflections and setting goals.
Link to **Mixing Up Opening Journals & Closing Reflections**	Each Embarc lesson typically begins and ends with an opening journal and a closing reflection. However, there are times that you might want to mix things up in your class. Use these creative ideas below to ensure students remain engaged in the beginning and end of class.
Link to **Hook Ideas**	Here you will find several examples of hooks that you could use to provoke thinking around the unit topic. The purpose of a "hook" is to help students frame their thinking and focus on the concept at hand, while engaging them in the topic and allowing them to see the relevancy to their own lives.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Sophomore Postsecondary Exploration
At-A-Glance Calendar

College Exploration

Co.E. Day 1	Co.E. Day 2	Co.E. Day 3	Co.E. Day 4	Co.E. Day 5
Activities: • Understanding Selectivity Gallery Walk • Creating Definitions for types of school • Intro to Selectivity Index	**Activities:** • College Exploration Day 1	**Activities:** • College Exploration Day 2	**Activities:** • College Exploration Day 3	**Activities:** • Creating College Explorations
Materials: • Chart Paper • Gallery Walk Labels • Selectivity Definitions • Selectivity Index	**Materials:** • Computers • Colleges by Selectivity • College Exploration Organizer (5 per student)	**Materials:** • Computers • Colleges by Selectivity from previous lesson • College Exploration Instructions from previous lesson	**Materials:** • Computers • Colleges by Selectivity from previous lesson • College Exploration Instructions from previous lesson	**Materials:** • Completed College Exploration Grids • Materials for presentation medium: computer, poster etc...

➕ Click on Day # to go directly to lesson

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Career Exploration

Ca.E. Day 1	Ca.E. Day 2	Ca.E. Day 3	Ca.E. Day 4	Ca.E. Day 5
Activities: • Career Survey & Reflection: Career Interest Profiler, Career Cluster Finder, Strengths Explorer	**Activities:** • Envisioning Career Choices • Class Discussion • Group Career Research and Presentations	**Activities:** • Career Research Day 1	**Activities:** • Career Research Day 2 • Finalization of Presentations	**Activities:** • Career Fair Presentations
Materials: • Computers • Survey Reflection Questions	**Materials:** • Chart paper with Career Cluster Descriptions • Group Career Research & Presentation Directions	**Materials:** • Career Research Notetaking Guide	**Materials:** • Career Research Notetaking Guide from previous lesson • How to Prepare for a Job Fair directions	**Materials:** • N/A

➕ Click on Day # to go directly to lesson

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

College Exploration

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
College Exploration

Co.E. Day 1

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: Do you want to go to college after high school? Why or why not? Even if you believe that college is not your first choice for a postsecondary pathway, why is it important to research and understand your choices for college? How could you use this information to make an informed decision about which path is right for you?

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover**: Act with a purpose. Follow clear instructions.
- ➕ **(A) Choose. Lead:** Consider how decisions will affect their future.
- ➕ **(R) Connect. Discover:** Talk about learning and relate to past experiences/knowledge

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Chart Paper
- Gallery Walk Labels
- Selectivity Definitions
- Selectivity Index

College Exploration: This portion of the unit focuses on college exploration. Students will begin to understand the Safe, Match, and Reach terminology, and they will peruse college entrance criteria in a variety of schools. After this section of the unit, students should have a basic understanding of the different types of educational institutions to choose from and their entrance criteria.

Understanding Selectivity: Students will do a gallery walk, first trying to define types of schools listed, then during the second round, they will list the characteristics of the type of student they believe attends each type of school.

- Place chart paper around the room with the labels of the selectivity ranges and one example school on each chart paper.
- Go over the example definition given in the resources.
- Put students into groups and have each group go to a separate selectivity area.
- Each group will attempt to come up with a definition for the type of school. When groups rotate, they may add on to prior definitions or they can come up with their own definition.
- Remind students that there are no right or wrong answers at this point - they are simply discussing what they think is the definition of the type of school and writing it down.
- Before the second round of rotations, give students the definition of each type of selectivity.
- Then, have students rotate through the posters one more time and write a list of characteristics that they believe representa student going to each type of school.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

	Selectivity Index Intro: After students have had a chance to think about these different types of schools, show them the Selectivity Index. Then, ask them to share out on the following questions: 1. How is a student's selectivity range determined? What two numbers are we looking at in order to figure out one's selectivity range? 2. The average SAT score in CPS is 951. With your current GPA and a SAT score of 951, where would you fall within the selectivity index? 3. How can this tool help you set solid goals for yourself as you begin thinking about life after high school?

Closing	
Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Closing Reflection on display	**Closing Reflection:** One important goal that Embarc has is to make sure students have options. Why do you think it is important to have options when it comes to life after high school? How can understanding different types of schools expand your options? Explain your answers.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Postsecondary Exploration

Gallery Walk Labels

Day 1

Two Year College	**Example:** **Definition:** Community Colleges, sometimes called Junior Colleges, are two-year schools that provide affordable postsecondary education as a pathway to a four-year degree.
Non-Selective University	**Example:** **Definition:**
Somewhat Selective University	**Example:** **Definition:**
Selective University	**Example:** Loyola University **Definition:**
Very Selective University	**Example:** Northwestern University **Definition:**

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Postsecondary Exploration

Selectivity Definitions

Day 1

Two Year College	**Definition:** Community Colleges, sometimes called Junior Colleges, are two-year schools that provide affordable postsecondary education as a pathway to a four-year degree. **Characteristics:** Affordable, usually do not have student housing, two-year degree and certification programs.
Non-Selective University	**Definition:** Four-year colleges or universities that admit students without requiring test scores or other traditional entrance criteria. **Characteristics:** Usually have a rolling application deadline, can be more expensive depending on the school (i.e. arts school), don't require ACT/SAT, have high emphasis on personal statements.
Somewhat Selective University	**Definition:** Four-year colleges or universities that have a slightly higher level of difficulty to be accepted into based on GPA and test scores. **Characteristics:** Somewhat competitive to get into, student housing available, four year degrees and masters programs available.
Selective University	**Definition:** Four year colleges or universities that have fairly high level of expectations for acceptance. Students applying to these schools have high ACT/SAT scores in combination with a higher GPA. **Characteristics:** Competitive to get into, student housing available, four year degrees and masters programs available.
Very Selective University	**Definition:** Four year colleges or universities that are extremely particular to choosing students to be accepted. Students applying to these universities have exceptional ACT/SAT scores and GPAs. **Characteristics:** Very competitive to get into, student housing available, four year degrees and masters programs available. Often these schools are among the most expensive.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Postsecondary Exploration

Selectivity Index

Day 1

Selectivity Index: Chicago

Note: SAT scores used on Selectivity Index are a sum of the critical reading and math sections only.

ACT	SAT	<2.0	2.0-2.24	2.25-2.49	2.5-2.74	2.75 -2.99	3.0-3.24	3.25-3.49	3.5+
24+	1090+	Somewhat Selective	Selective	Selective	Selective/ Very Selective	Selective/ Very Selective	Very Selective	Very Selective	Very Selective
21-23	980-1080	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective	Selective	Selective	Selective/ Very Selective	Selective/ Very Selective	Selective/ Very Selective
18-20	870-970	Four-Year Eligible	Four-Year Eligible	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective	Selective	Selective	Selective/ Very Selective
16-17	790-860	Two-Year	Four-Year Eligible	Four-Year Eligible	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective
<16	<790	Two-Year	Four-Year Eligible	Four-Year Eligible	Four-Year Eligible	Four-Year Eligible	Four-Year Eligible	Somewhat Selective	Somewhat Selective

Section:

1. How is a student's selectivity range determined? What two numbers are we looking at in order to figure out one's selectivity range?

2. The average SAT score in CPS is 951. With your current GPA and a SAT score of 951, where would you fall within the selectivity index?

3. How can this tool help you set solid goals for yourself as you begin thinking about life after high school?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
College Exploration

Co.E. Day 2

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Journal prompt on display	**Journal:** Think about what type of environment you want to be in when you go to College. Do you want to be on a big campus or a small campus? Live in the dorms or at home? Be on a diverse campus or one that has students very similar to you? Be in the city or a small town? How would these conditions contribute to or take away from your chances of succeeding in college?

Activity

ARC Objectives:

- ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover:** Act with a purpose. Follow clear instructions.
- ➕ **(R) Envision. Understand:** Classify specific behaviors and/or strategies that will promote or derail future visions.

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:

- ○ Computers
- ○ Colleges by Selectivity
- ○ College Exploration Organizer (5 per student)

College Exploration: Today students will begin a three day college exploration process during which time they will discover a little bit about one college in each selectivity range. At the end of this section of the unit, students will present their findings.

- Give students the College Exploration Instructions
- Allow students time to ask clarifying questions
- Give students today and the next two days to complete their college exploration using the grid. They will need 5 copies of the grid in order to complete one for each of the selectivity ranges.
- If students finish early, they may begin building out their presentation.

*Teacher note, the list of colleges for students to explore are in Illinois. If students know of a school that they would like to explore outside of Illinois, give them that option

Closing

Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Closing Reflection on display	**Closing Reflection:** What are three important details you learned about a college or university today? After your research, could you see yourself attending this college or university? Why or why not?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Name: _____ Date: _____

Postsecondary Exploration

Colleges by Selectivity

Day 2

Two Year Illinois	Non-Selective Illinois	Somewhat Selective Illinois	Selective Illinois	Very Selective Illinois
• CCC Richard J. Daley College • CCC Harold Washington College • CCC Kennedy-King College • CCC Malcolm X College • CCC Olive-Harvey College • CCC Wilbur Wright College • Joliet Junior College • Kishwaukee College • Moraine Valley Community College	• Columbia College Chicago • Devry University • East-West University • Kendall College • Macmurray College • National Louis University, Chicago Campus • Northeastern Illinois University	• Chicago State University • Eastern Illinois University • Elmhurst COllege • Illinois State University • North Park University • Northern Illinois University • Quincy University • Saint Xavier University • University of Illinois at Chicago • Western Illinois University • Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	• Depaul University • Loyola University Chicago • Roosevelt University • North Central COllege • Lake Forest College • Augustana College • Bradley University	• Illinois Institute of Technology • Illinois Wesleyan University • Northwestern University • University of Chicago • University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign • Wheaton College

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Name: _____ Date: _____

Postsecondary Exploration

College Exploration Organizer

Day 2

Directions: Use the grid below to guide your college exploration. You must complete one of these grids for a college or university of your choice in Each selectivity range.

Tips for finding information on a college or university	Options for Exploration: • Naviance • College Board • School websites ○ Begin with their "admissions" tabs and their undergraduate admissions information

School Name:	**Selectivity Range**:
SAT/ACT Required? Y N	**ACT/SAT**: **GPA**:
List at least two majors you **would** like to study.	**Does the school have these majo**rs?
1.	
2.	
Is the school a university, college, or two year institution?	
How many students attend?	
Who studies there? Consider race, gender, age, and professional interests.	
Does the school have a religious affiliation?	
Where is the school located? Consider climate, distance from home, and setting.	
What type of student housing is available?	
What is the tuition?	

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
College Exploration

Co.E. Day 3

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: What are some of the advantages to attending a two year college? What are some disadvantages? Can you see this as a potential option for your postsecondary pathway? Explain your answer

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover:** Act with a purpose. Follow clear instructions.
- ➕ **(R) Envision. Understand:** Classify specific behaviors and/or strategies that will promote or derail future visions.

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Computers
- Colleges by Selectivity *from previous lesson*
- College Exploration Instructions *from previous lesson*

College Exploration: Today students will continue their exploration process of discovering valuable information about colleges in each selectivity range. At the end of this section of the unit, students will present their findings.

- Make sure students have the College Exploration Instructions and grids they need for today
- Ask if there is anything on the grids that students are having a difficult time finding.
- Give students today and one additional day to complete their college exploration using the grid. They will need 5 copies of the grid in order to complete one for each of the selectivity ranges.
- If students finish early, they may begin building out their presentation.

*Teacher note, the list of colleges for students to explore are in Illinois. If students know of a school that they would like to explore outside of Illinois, give them that option (be sure they are attaching the appropriate selectivity to it).

Closing

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Closing Reflection on display

Closing Reflection: What are three important details you learned about a college or university today? After your research, could you see yourself attending this college or university? Why or why not?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
College Exploration

Co.E. Day 4

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Journal prompt on display	**Journal:** Research shows that oftentimes students are more successful when they attend a college that is more challenging rather than a college that is easy for them. Why do you think this is? What is it about a challenge that leads someone to success? Do you hope to attend a challenge school or are you looking for a quick and easy degree? Explain your answer.

Activity

ARC Objectives: ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover:** Act with a purpose. Follow clear instructions. ➕ **(R) Envision. Understand:** Classify specific behaviors and/or strategies that will promote or derail future visions. **Timing:** 30-35minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Computers ○ Colleges by Selectivity *from previous lesson* ○ College Exploration Instructions *from previous lesson*	**College Exploration:** Today students will finish their exploration process of discovering valuable information about colleges in each selectivity range. At the end of this section of the unit, students will present their findings. • Make sure students have the College Exploration Instructions and grids they need for today. • Ask if there is anything on the grids that students are still having a difficult time finding • Give students today to complete their college exploration using the grid. By the end of today's class, they should have 5 completed grids • If students finish early, they may begin building out their presentation. *Teacher note, the list of colleges for students to explore are in Illinois. If students know of a school that they would like to explore outside of Illinois, give them that option (be sure they are attaching the appropriate selectivity to it).

Closing

Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Closing Reflection on display	**Closing Reflection:** What are three important details you learned about a college or university today? After your research, could you see yourself attending this college or university? Why or why not?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
College Exploration

Co.E. Day 5

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: What have you found to be surprising about the information you have discovered about the different types of colleges? Based on your research, what type of school do you see yourself attending? Why? What goals do you need to set for yourself in order to be able to attend the school of your choice? Explain your answers.

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover:** Act with a purpose. Follow clear instructions.
- ➕ **(A) Encounter. Lead:** Create and/or share products
- ➕ **(R) Envision. Understand:** Classify specific behaviors and/or strategies that will promote or derail future visions.

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Completed College Exploration Grids
- Materials for presentation medium: computer, poster etc...

College Exploration Presentation Instructions: Today students will use their completed college exploration grids to compile the most important information into a presentation to share with their peers.

Step 1: Choose a presentation medium. Some include, but are not limited to:

1. Powerpoint of Google Slides
2. Prezi
3. Poster
4. College Options Brochure
5. College Fliers (one for each selectivity range)
6. Infographics for each college

Step 2: Design your presentation to include the following for each school.

1. School name
2. Selectivity Range
3. Admissions Criteria (Test scores and GPA)
4. Tuition
5. 3 fun facts
6. How the school would either contribute to your chances of success or how it might derail your chances of success

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

	Step 3: Have students gather into triads to present their favorite college or university that they researched. Use the following protocol. 1. Presenter A has 2 minutes to present while the other two group members listen 2. The other two group members have 1 minute to give 1 warm and 1 cool piece of feedback each (this could be about the school or the presentation) 3. Complete two more rounds so that each participant has the chance to present (encourage students to present a new college or university if their favorite has already been presented).

Closing	
Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Closing Reflection on display	**Closing Reflection:** What is something you learned from your peers during their college exploration presentation? How can learning from your peers continue to help you make important decisions about your postsecondary options?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Career Exploration

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
Career Exploration

Ca.E. Day 1

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: Read the following quote and then answer the question that follows:
- "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." - Confucius
- What is something you could do everyday for the rest of your life and love it everyday? Why? Explain in as much detail as possible.

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover.** Act with a purpose. Follow clear instructions.
- ➕ **(R)Envision. Discover:** Create a positive image of what one wants to become.

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Computers
- Survey Reflection Questions

Today students will begin to explore careers that might interest them by taking surveys around their interests and strengths to give them insight into choosing their career pathway. Reassure students that this is not a test and that there are no right or wrong answers, so they should answer honestly. There are a lot of questions, so they need to stay focused and try not to get frustrated with the length of the assessments.

Career Exploration:

- Give students the Survey Reflection Questions.
- Provide students time to ask any clarifying questions.
- Explain to students that they will be completing three surveys: the Career Interest Profiler, Career Cluster Finder, and the Strengths Explorer
- Let students know that they can complete these surveys in any order and give them a brief overview of what they will find in each one
    - Career Interest Profiler: designed to help students discover the types of work activities and careers that match their interests
    - Career Cluster Finder: matches students' interests and personal qualities to careers that may be a good match for them
    - Strengths Explorer: identifies students' areas of strength
- Allow 2 days for students to complete their surveys and complete the reflection guide.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

	• If students finish early, they can choose a career cluster and begin building out their presentation.

Closing	
Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Closing Reflection on display	**Closing Reflection:** Write a one page reflection about what you have learned about yourself after the Career Clusters and Career Interest Surveys from the past two days. Were you surprised by anything? Did any of the results make you think differently about your possible career pathway? What type of schooling do you think you would need for some of the careers that fit your strengths?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Name: _____ Date: _____

Postsecondary Exploration

Survey Reflection Questions

Day 1

Career Interests Profiler/Career Cluster Finder:

Summarize the results of your Career Interests Profiler:

Click on the "View Matching Occupation List" List two careers that sound interesting to you in each of the following categories:

1. Some Preparation:
2. Medium Preparation:
3. Considerable Preparation:
4. Extensive Preparation:

Does the amount of preparation change your mind about any of the career options that you are interested in? Why or why not?

What is one thing that you can begin to do today to get ready for one of your preferred career paths?

Is there a profession that you have had in mind that didn't make the list based on your Career Profiler?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Strengths Explorer:

What are your strengths?

Which strengths do you agree with and why?

Which strengths do you disagree with and why?

How could you use the knowledge of these strengths as you begin to think about what you want to do after high school?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
Career Exploration

Ca.E. Day 2

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: What is a career that has always been your dream, but you're not sure if you could achieve it? Why do you have hesitations about this particular career? What would a typical day in the life of this career be like?

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- **(A) Tinker. Discover:** Take on different perspectives; negotiate ideas with others
- **(R) Describe & Evaluate. Discover:** Talk about feelings and thoughts related to experiences

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Chart paper with Career Cluster Descriptions
- Group Career Research & Presentation Directions

Envisioning Career Choices: Now that students have some new knowledge about their career clusters and their interests from taking a variety of surveys, they will choose one career cluster to focus on in groups. They will begin to think about why people choose certain careers and discuss the "daily grind" of the top chosen career clusters among adolescents.

Opening Activity: Lead a discussion based on the following questions:

1. What are some reasons people choose the careers that they go into?
2. Americans work more than any other industrialized nation in the world. Due to this fact, why do you think it's important to choose a career that you love?
3. How can choosing the wrong career negatively impact your life? Your health? Your emotional well-being?
4. Do you think some people choose career paths without having enough knowledge about the actual daily work? Explain.

Dividing into Career Clusters: Set up chart paper around the room with the various career clusters and example desired professions among adolescents that correspond with those career clusters.

1. Have students self-select a career cluster to work on based on their career cluster, career interest, and strengths finder survey.
2. Provide guidelines to groups around their expectations for the presentation they will create based on their career cluster.
3. Give groups time to brainstorm ideas for their presentation and assign different tasks/roles to group members.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Closing	
Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Closing Reflection on display	**Closing Reflection:** How does the career that you chose to research connect to your strengths explorer and career interest inventories? Would having this career allow you to connect to what you think is important in life on a daily basis? Why or why not?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Name: _____ Date: _____

Postsecondary Exploration

Career Cluster Descriptions

Day 2

Human Service Cluster	**Description:** The human service career cluster contains jobs that deal with families and human needs, helping people manage their many mental, emotional and practical demands of everyday life. **Careers highlighted in this cluster:** lawyer, clinical psychologist, counselor, childcare provider, clergy, social worker, barber, fitness trainer, manicurist/pedicurist
Education and Training	**Description:** The education and training career cluster focuses on planning, managing, and providing education and training services and related learning support services. **Careers highlighted in this cluster:** Education administrator (principal, curriculum specialist), librarian, interpreter/translator, teacher, coach
Finances	**Description:** The finance career cluster encompasses careers that focus on financial and investment planning, banking, insurance, and financial management. **Careers highlighted in this cluster:** Accounting, Banking services (loan officer, bank teller, credit checker), Insurance (actuary, claims adjuster), , Securities and Investment (fraud examiner, risk management analyzer), Business, Entrepreneur
Health Science	**Description:** The health science career cluster is focused on wellness, nutrition, medicine, injury, disease, and technology. **Careers highlighted in this cluster:** biomedical engineer, epidemiologist, MRI technologist, doctor, science/biology, nurse, veterinarian, acupuncturist, art therapist, dentist, dietician/nutritionist, midwife, opthamologist, physical therapist, recreational therapist,
Arts, Technology and Comm.	**Description:** The Arts, AV, and communications career cluster encompasses designing, producing, exhibiting, performing, and publishing multimedia content. **Careers highlighted in this cluster:** editor, newscaster, photographer, poet, actor, agent, choreographer, musician, fashion designer, graphic designer
Architecture and Construction	**Description:** The architecture and construction cluster is about using your skills in design, planning, and management to work in careers building and maintaining structures. **Careers highlighted in this cluster:** brickmason, carpenter, construction manager, painter, plumber, paver, stonemason, civil drafter, civil engineer, commercial driver

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Name: _____ Date: _____

Postsecondary Exploration

Group Career Research & Presentation

Day 2

Presentation Guidelines and Expectations:

You will be participating in a mock career recruitment fair during which you will be the one hiring and recruiting for your career cluster of choice. Your job is to SELL your profession. In order to recruit the best candidates to hire, you need to know the career inside and out and be able to present it in a clear and compelling way.

Group Directions:

After reading the career cluster description and highlighted careers, decide on the following as a group.

Step 1: Have each individual choose a career that they would like to research more in depth. Each member of the group should choose a different career. Note: If the career that they would like to research is not listed in the example, but falls within this career cluster, that is okay.

1. Group Member Name: _____ Career: _____
2. Group Member Name: _____ Career: _____
3. Group Member Name: _____ Career: _____
4. Group Member Name: _____ Career: _____
5. Group Member Name: _____ Career: _____

Step 2: As a group agree upon a mode of presentation to best sell your career cluster and the accompanying careers that you will be highlighting (i.e. will everyone make a poster, brochure, ppt, speech?)

Agreed upon presentation rubric: _____

Step 3: As a group assign each person to the following roles

1. Group 1 candidates (listen to other career pitches first)
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
2. Group 1 hiring committee (pitch career first
   a. _____
   b. _____

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
Career Exploration

Ca.E. Day 3

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: What is one career that you would absolutely hate doing? Why would you hate it? What would be the worst part about this career?

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover:** Act with a purpose; follow clear directions.
- ➕ **(A) Practice. Understand:** Apply new skills in a creative way
- ➕ **(A) Tinker. Lead:** Create innovative solutions/products
- ➕ **(R) Connect. Discover:** Talk about learning and relate to past experiences/knowledge

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Career Research Notetaking Guide

Putting it All Together: Now that students have met with their group to determine roles and tasks for preparing their career cluster fair presentation, they will have the next three days to research and prepare their presentations. Remind students that it is important that even if they don't know which path they want to go into, they should still know how to do research about different career pathways.

Step 1: Allow students the entire class period today and tomorrow to gather their information about their careers. Students should use the template to collect all the information they need, but they can also gather any other facts that they find interesting about their career to help them SELL it to candidates.

Step 2: Once the "career research note taking guide" is completed, students should design and create their presentation (based upon the agreed mode of presentation) for recruitment time.

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Closing	
Timing: 5-8 Minutes **Resources/Materials:** ○ Closing Reflection on display	**Closing Reflection:** What is one thing you did really well today to ensure that you will give a well-informed career presentation? What is one thing that you want to improve as you continue your project tomorrow?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Name: _____ Date: _____

Postsecondary Exploration

Career Research Notetaking Guide

Day 3

Career cluster		
Summarize what this cluster entails		
Career to Highlight		
5 most important skills to be successful in this career	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
5 important abilities to be successful in this career	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
5 important knowledge areas to be successful in this career	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
10 typical tasks	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
Average salary in IL		
"Plan of Study" for this career		
Three Colleges that have offer this major	1. 2. 3.	

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
Career Exploration

Ca.E. Day 4

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: What is the most important thing to consider when choosing a career pathway? Why is this the most important thing to consider? Explain.

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- ➕ **(A) Contribute. Discover:** Act with a purpose; follow clear directions.
- ➕ **(A) Practice. Understand:** Apply new skills in a creative way
- ➕ **(A) Tinker. Lead:** Create innovative solutions/products
- ➕ **(R) Connect. Discover:** Talk about learning and relate to past experiences/knowledge

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Career Research Notetaking Guide *from previous lesson*
- How to Prepare for a Job Fair directions

Career Cluster Job Fair Preparation:

Step 1: Allow students the entire class period today to finalize their presentations about their careers. Students should use the template to collect all the information they need, but they can also gather any other facts that they find interesting about their career to help them SELL it to candidates.

Step 2: Once the "career research note taking guide" is completed, students should design and create their presentation (based upon the agreed mode of presentation) for recruitment time.

Teacher Note: As students are preparing for their presentation, it may be helpful to brainstorm as a class what and how students should prepare for a job fair as an employer. You can have students reference the article titled "How to Prepare for a Job Fair" to come up with an assignment guide.

Closing

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Closing Reflection on display

Closing Reflection: What is one thing you did really well today to ensure that you will give a well-informed career presentation? What is one thing that you want to improve as you continue your project tomorrow?

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Name: _____ Date: _____

Postsecondary Exploration

How to Prepare for a Job Fair

Day 4

1. Order or create marketing material
2. Make sure you create an attractive booth with banners and pictures of your company. Also, have:
    - Name tags for each of your team members
    - Brochures with information about your company
    - Business cards with recruiters' contact details
3. Prepare your questions: You will have limited time with each job seeker, so prepare your questions in advance. Here's what to ask:
    - Role-specific questions. These will help you learn if candidates have the minimum skills and abilities required for this career (e.g. "*Do you have experience with X software?*")
    - Questions about interests and career goals. Use these to learn if candidates would be compatible with your company in the long-run. (e.g. "*What's your area of expertise and what would you like to learn more about?*

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0

Embarc

Postsecondary Exploration
Career Exploration

Ca.E. Day 5

Opening

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Journal prompt on display

Journal: You go into a job interview, normally, you have to worry about the questions the employers will ask you. Today, the employers are competing for you. If 5 different employers were battline for you as an employee, what are some questions you would ask them in order to make sure that career was a good fit for you?

Activity

ARC Objectives:
- ➕ **(A) Encounter. Lead:** Create and share products
- ➕ **(A) Tinker. Lead:** Evaluate the outcomes
- ➕ **(R) Describe & Evaluate. Understand:** Use experience and/or feedback to decipher between better and worse options.

Timing: 30-35minutes

Resources/Materials:
- N/A

Career Fair Presentations:

Step 1: Set the room up so that the professionals can have their presentations in different areas of the room.

Step 2: Assign the first group of candidates a career cluster to start at.

Step 3: The professionals will pitch their careers to the candidates as they rotate around the room. Each rotation should last 3 minutes.

Step 4: Once the candidates have listened to the other five career clusters, have the candidates and professionals switch roles.

Note: Encourage students to practice the core value of curiosity as they will be exposed to a variety of careers that they may not have been aware of.

Closing

Timing: 5-8 Minutes

Resources/Materials:
- Closing Reflection on display

Closing Reflection: The closing reflection will serve as a sort of ballot: Based on the professional presentations today. I would apply to be a _____ because of the following details: _____, _____, _____. The professional sold me on this career by demonstrating the following; _____, _____, _____

© Embarc · Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 · creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0